CLAIMS

1. A graphical user interface for a media player, the graphical user interface comprising:

a button associated with accessing media stored on a computing system; and

an actuation mechanism to enable a user to select the button, whereupon selection of the button causes the media player to obtain information regarding media available to the user and to display the information regarding media available to the user in a hierarchical manner.

2. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 1 wherein the display of information regarding media available to the user includes a listing of audio files arranged by artist.

3. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 1 wherein the display of information regarding media available to the user includes a listing of audio files arranged by album.

4. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 1 wherein the display of information regarding media available to the user includes a list of audio files arranged by genre.

5. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 1 wherein the display of information regarding media available to the user includes at least one media device.

6. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 1 wherein the display of information regarding media available to the user includes a plurality of playlists.

7. A graphical user interface for a media player, the graphical user interface comprising:

a media access button associated with accessing media stored on a computing system; and

a hierarchical menu associated with the media access button, the hierarchical menu listing media available to the user of the computing system, whereupon selection of an entry in the hierarchical menu causes the media player to play a media item associated with the selection.

8. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 7 wherein the entry in the hierarchical menu is a listing of media items arranged by artist.

9. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 7 wherein the entry in the hierarchical menu is a listing of media items arranged by album.

10. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 7 wherein the entry in the hierarchical menu is a listing of media items arranged by genre.

11. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 7 wherein the entry in the hierarchical menu is a listing of available media drives.

12. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 7 wherein the entry in the hierarchical menu is a playlist of media items.

13. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 7 wherein the entry in the hierarchical menu is a listing of streaming media links.

14. A method comprising:

receiving a request for media data from a media access client;

identifying one or more stored media items;

identifying one or more stored media lists; and

providing information regarding the one or more stored media items and the one or more stored media lists to the media access client.

15. A method as recited in claim 14 further comprising categorizing the information regarding the one or more stored media items and the one or more stored media lists.

16. A method as recited in claim 14 wherein the one or more stored media items include audio files.

17.   A method as recited in claim 14 wherein the one or more stored media items include video files.

18.   A method as recited in claim 14 wherein the one or more stored media items include streaming media links.

19.   A method as recited in claim 14 wherein the one or more stored media lists include lists of audio files arranged by audio file artist.

20.   A method as recited in claim 14 wherein the one or more stored media lists include lists of audio files arranged by an album associated with the each audio file.

21.   A method as recited in claim 14 wherein the one or more stored media lists include lists of audio files arranged by a genre associated with the each audio file.

22.   A method as recited in claim 14 further comprising:

identifying one or more stored playlists; and

providing information regarding the one or more stored playlists to the media access client.

23.   A method as recited in claim 22 wherein the one or more stored playlists are user-specified playlists.

24. A method as recited in claim 14 further comprising:

identifying one or more media devices; and

providing information regarding the one or more media devices to the media access client.

25. A method as recited in claim 24 wherein the one or more media devices are CD players.

26. A method as recited in claim 24 wherein the one or more media devices are DVD players.

27. One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim 14.

28. A method comprising:

generating a request for media data;

receiving information regarding one or more media items;

receiving information regarding one or more media devices;

categorizing the information regarding the one or more media items and the one or more media devices; and

generating a user interface containing the categorized information.

29. A method as recited in claim 28 further comprising:

receiving information regarding one or more media lists; and

categorizing the information regarding the one or more media lists.

30. A method as recited in claim 28 further comprising:

receiving information regarding one or more playlists; and

categorizing the information regarding the one or more playlists.

31. A method as recited in claim 28 further comprising:

receiving a user selection entered through the user interface, wherein the user selection has an associated operation; and

communicating the associated operation to a media access server.

32. A method as recited in claim 31 wherein the media access server performs the associated operation.

33. A method as recited in claim 31 wherein the associated operation is playing a media item.

34. A method as recited in claim 28 wherein the one or more media items include audio files.

35. A method as recited in claim 28 wherein the one or more media items include video files.

36. A method as recited in claim 28 wherein the one or more media items include streaming media links.

37. One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim 28.

38. A method comprising:

receiving a request for media data from a media access client;

identifying one or more media items stored in a media database;

identifying one or more media lists stored in a media database;

identifying one or more media devices; and

providing information regarding the one or more media items, the one or more media lists, and the one or more stored media devices to the media access client.

39. A method as recited in claim 38 further comprising:

receiving a request to perform an operation from the media access client; and

performing the requested operation.

40. A method as recited in claim 39 wherein performing the requested operation includes playing a media item.

41. One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim 38.

42. An apparatus comprising:

a media access server;

a media database coupled to the media access server;

a first media device coupled to the media access server;

a first media access client coupled to the media access server; and

a second media access client coupled to the media access server, wherein the media access server identifies media items stored in the media database and provides information regarding the identified media items and the first media device to the first media access client and the second media access client.

43. An apparatus as recited in claim 42 further comprising a user interface generator coupled to the first media access client, wherein the user interface generator.

44. An apparatus as recited in claim 42 further comprising:

a first user interface generator coupled to the first media access client, wherein the first user interface generator generates a first user interface based on information received from the first media access client; and

a second user interface generator coupled to the second media access client, wherein the second user interface generator generates a second user interface based on information received from the second media access client.

45. An apparatus as recited in claim 44 wherein the first user interface includes information regarding media items stored in the media database.

46. An apparatus as recited in claim 44 wherein the first user interface includes information regarding media files stored in the media database, media lists stored in the media database, and information regarding the first media device.

47. An apparatus comprising:

means for identifying at least one media item, at least one media list, and at least one media device;

means for storing information regarding the at least one media item, the at least one media list, and the at least one media device;

means for providing information regarding the at least one media item, the at least one media list, and the at least one media device to a requesting media access client;

wherein the means for identifying at least one media item, at least one media list, and at least one media device further performs media-related operations for the requesting media access client.

48. An apparatus as recited in claim 47 further comprising means for generating a user interface containing information related to the at least one media item, at least one media list, and at least one media device.

49. An apparatus as recited in claim 47 wherein the one or more media lists include audio files associated with a particular artist.

50. An apparatus as recited in claim 47 wherein the one or more media lists include audio files associated with a particular album.

51. An apparatus as recited in claim 47 wherein the one or more media lists include audio files associated with a particular genre of music.

52. One or more computer-readable media having stored thereon a computer program that, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to:

receive a request for media data from a media access client;

identify one or more stored audio files;

identify one or more stored media lists;

identify one or more media devices; and

provide information regarding the one or more stored audio files, the one or more stored media lists, and the one or more media devices to the media access client.

53. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 52 wherein the one or more processors further categorize the information regarding the one or more stored audio files, the one or more stored media lists, and the one or more media devices.

54. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 52 wherein the one or more processors further performs media-related operations for the requesting media access client.